

Army Civilian Corps

By Ms. Karin Gan

In addition to its Officer Corps and Noncommissioned Officer Corps, there is now a new corps in the Army family—the Army Civilian Corps. The establishment of this corps was announced to Army personnel in a 19 June 2006 memorandum signed by General Peter J. Schoomaker, then Chief of Staff of the Army, and Dr. Francis J. Harvey, then Secretary of the Army.¹ In the memorandum, they stated that Army civilians have a 230-year record of service and are extremely critical to the total Army force structure. *Army Civilian Corps* is a fitting title for this group of people; the name helps unify the Army civilian service and exemplifies the commitment of these dedicated individuals.

The memorandum further stated that Army civilians serve in all theaters and are deployed throughout the world in support of the Army's missions, to include the Global War on Terrorism. Not only do they assist with many of the reconstruction projects in Iraq and Afghanistan, but Army civilians are also being recruited to fill other positions to support the war.² And here at home, they help train Soldiers for deployment and maintain the facilities while the Soldiers are away, defending our country. As the missions have evolved and become more complex, so have the roles of Army civilians. In addition, the stability and continuity that the civilians provide is invaluable in keeping the Army at a high state of readiness.

Like their uniformed counterparts, Army civilians are committed to selfless service in the performance of their duties. This is illustrated in the Army Civilian Corps Creed,³ which defines the purpose and role of Army civilian employees (see Figure 1).

Army Civilian Corps Creation

The creation of the Army Civilian Corps resulted from a study conducted from August 2001 through February 2003 by the Army Training and Leadership Development Panel (ATLDP).⁴ Through this study (which involved 40,000 civilians, using written and online surveys, focus-group sessions, and personal interviews), the panel of senior civilian and military subject matter experts were able to determine the needs and concerns of Army civilians.

One thing that the study revealed was that Army civilians were not being adequately trained for leadership roles. "The Army grows and develops the best Soldiers in the world—and trains them to be leaders. However, growing Army civilian

leaders has fallen short of that requirement."⁵ As the Army transforms, the reliance on the civilian workforce will increase.

Army civilian leaders of the 21st century must be well-trained so they can support our Soldiers to their fullest potential. They must be *pentathlete* leaders—multiskilled strategic and creative thinkers who can build leaders and teams. Figure 2 shows the skills and attributes⁶ needed to become pentathlete civilian leaders who personify the Warrior Ethos in all aspects, from warfighting support, to statesmanship, to business management.⁷

Civilian Education System

The ATLDP recommended four "imperatives" designed to help develop Army civilians and grow leaders: accountability, lifelong learning, interpersonal skills, and Army culture.⁸ "Like their uniformed counterparts, Army

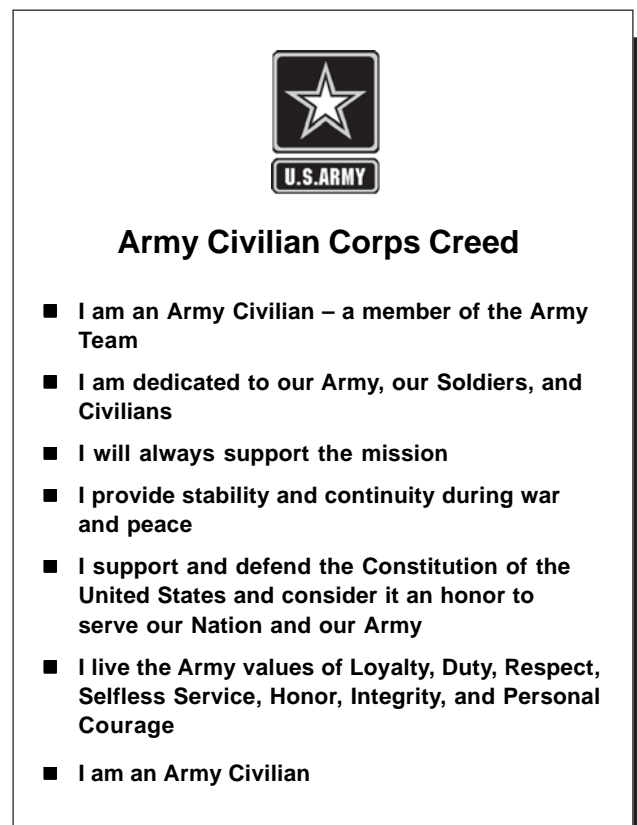


Figure 1

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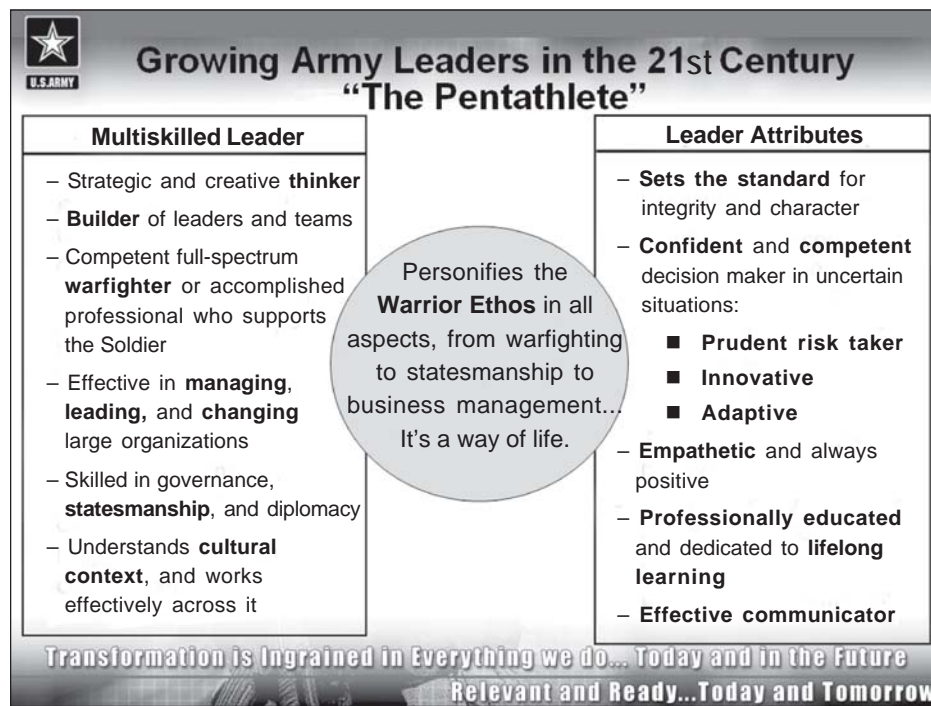


Figure 2

civilians must be well-developed, motivated, and forward-thinking to meet the challenges of the 21st century.”⁹ They “require a leader development education structure parallel to that of their uniformed counterparts.”¹⁰

Toward that end, a new Civilian Education System (CES) is being developed and staffed with the major commands. Phase 1 began in January 2007; additional phases will begin as the CES program develops.¹¹

The CES plan includes four courses that are sequential and progressive:¹²

- **Foundation Course (FC).** This course is for civilians entering the Army with various levels of previous experience. It is entirely distributed learning (dL). Students will learn to understand and appreciate Army values and customs, serve professionally as a member of the Department of the Army, acquire foundation competencies for leader development, develop effective communication skills, and be ready to assume a first leadership role.
- **Basic Course (BC).** This course is for leaders who exercise direct leadership to effectively lead a team. It will be a combination of dL and a 2-week resident phase at the Army Management Staff College (AMSC) Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, campus. Students will understand and apply basic leadership skills to effectively lead and care for small teams, apply effective communication skills, and develop and mentor subordinates.
- **Intermediate Course (IC).** This course is for leaders who exercise direct and indirect supervision. It is a combination of dL and a 3-week resident phase at either the AMSC Fort Leavenworth or Fort Belvoir, Virginia, campus. Students learn skills to manage human and financial resources, direct program management and systems

integration, display flexibility and resilience, and focus on the mission.

- **Advanced Course (AC).** This course is for leaders who exercise predominately indirect supervision. It is a combination of dL and a 4-week resident phase at the AMSC Fort Belvoir campus. Students become skilled in leading a complex organization, managing human and financial resources, leading change, inspiring vision and creativity, directing program management and systems integration, displaying flexibility and resilience, and focusing on the mission.

Legacy leader development courses such as Leadership Education and Development (LEAD), Leadership Education and Development Train the Trainer (LEAD TTT), Organizational Leadership for Executives (OLE), Personnel Management for Executives (PME) I and II, Strategic Leadership Education (SLE), and Sustaining Base Leadership and Management (SBLM) have been phased out and will be replaced by, or incorporated into, the four CES courses.¹³ Information on dates and location of the classes will be posted on the AMSC website at <http://www.amsc.belvoir.army.mil/ces/> and in the Civilian Leader Development Transformation Community on Army Knowledge Online (AKO).¹⁴

Another result of the panel was the November 2004 establishment of the Civilian Advisory Board.¹⁵ The purpose of this board is to—

- Provide the Chief of Staff, Army, and his staff with professional advice and assistance in matters pertaining to the civilian work force.
- Serve as a representative and advocate for Army civilians in matters raised to the Chief of Staff, Army.

- Strengthen the bonds between uniformed and civilian members of the Army.
- Highlight the importance of keeping Army civilian workforce issues integrated into the Army planning process. Advance training and leader development to the forefront of Army priorities.

Conclusion

According to former Chief of Staff of the Army Schoomaker and former Secretary of the Army Harvey, Army civilian employees of yesterday, today, and tomorrow are—and will remain—an integral part of the Army team. They have earned this distinction because of their vital service to the Nation and the Army.¹⁶ To support our Soldiers as they carry out the Army's missions, the Army Civilian Corps, too, must be *Army Strong*.

Personal Observations

Growing up as an "Army brat," I learned from my father a deep respect for my country, the American Flag, and the United States Army. I began my civil service career straight out of high school as a Federal Junior Fellow, GS-2, in the Civilian Personnel Office at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. During the time I was completing my college degree, I was very lucky to have supervisors and mentors in the Civilian Personnel Office who personified and enforced in me the importance of my responsibilities as an Army civilian and of giving 100 percent while performing quality work.

The Army Civilian Corps Creed should be a reminder to civilian employees that our purpose is to serve and support—our country, our Army, and our Soldiers. We made that choice when we decided to work in the public sector rather than in the private sector. And we are truly fortunate to have that opportunity. Take a moment to study the creed. Most will find that not only do we practice these beliefs, we also understand and support them.

Although there will always be some Army civilians who fail to live up to their commitment and, as a result, cause all of us to be viewed negatively by some Soldiers, they are far outnumbered by the many who strive to support the Army's mission and to protect our country and our Constitution. Most of us take pride in being part of the Army Civilian Corps and look forward to transforming with this great Army team.



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Endnotes

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⁴ "The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Report, Phase IV (Civilian Study)," 24 February 2003, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army/atld-panel/civ_report.pdf>, accessed on 14 February 2007.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Secretary of the Army, speech given at the Association of the United States Army convention, Washington, D.C., 9 October 2006.

⁷ DAMO-TR Message, "Change 1: Emphasize Importance of Civilian Education System Course Enrollment," 16 January 2007.

⁸ The ATLDP Report.

⁹ John Plifka, "Civilian Education System Leader Development Program (CES LDP)," *AMSC News*, Volume 1, Issue 1, 17 November 2006, page 7.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ DAMO-TR, "Civilian Education System Policy," memorandum, 22 November 2006.

¹² Army Management Staff College, "Civilian Education System – Transforming Leaders Through Education," <<http://www.amsc.belvoir.army.mil/ces/>>, accessed on 14 February 2007.

¹³ Department of the Army (Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1), "Transforming Civilian Leader Development," memorandum, 26 May 2006.

¹⁴ AKO Civilian Leader Development Transformation Community. At the AKO homepage, choose the *Site Map* tab, then *Army Organizations*, then *Operations (view related content)*, which will give you a pull-down menu. Choose *Pages and Groups*, which will give you another pull-down menu. Choose *Leader Development (view related content)*, which will give you a pull-down menu. Choose *Pages and Groups*, which will give you another pull-down menu, then choose *Civilian Leader Development*, accessed on 16 February 2007.

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